



**National Association of
American Veterans™**

*Serving Our Nation's Service Members and Veterans
with Honor and Respect*

Received & Inspected

OCT 05 2015

FCC Mail Room

September 28, 2015

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization, WC Docket No. 11-42

Dear Secretary Dortch:

The National Association of American Veterans, Inc. (NAAV) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 2005. We are based in Washington, DC, and receive an average of 200 calls daily for emergency assistance and referrals nationwide. NAAV is working to make a difference in the quality of life for those who served and are serving in the US Armed Forces.

We are writing in support of the proposal outlined in a letter from Veterans Affairs Committee Ranking Member Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) to Federal Communications Chairman (FCC) Tom Wheeler, urging the Commission to work to expand Veteran access to the Lifeline program. NAAV believes the Commission should consider including among qualifying programs those support programs explicitly targeted to low-income Veterans such as the Veterans Pension Benefit program and the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing program as proposed in the Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM). As a nonprofit organization, serving Veterans on the front lines, we have seen how a Lifeline phone can help people. One Veteran wrote to tell us that "those 250 minutes have been a lifesaver" and went on to say how it made a difference communicating with work and her 11-year-old son's school.

We agree with Senator Blumenthal's suggestion that the FCC and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) should improve coordinated enrollment opportunities for Veterans to easily enroll in the FCC's Lifeline program. The Senator is correct when he asks that the FCC and VA should have a special focus on the VA's pension participants as well as on homeless Veterans. Right now, we educate many Veterans about the Lifeline program in our outreach activities at the Washington DC VA Medical Center and the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Maryland, and we see how beneficial the program is for Veterans and their families, especially for those who are older or who are recovering from injuries, as well as those who are homeless.

Senator Blumenthal is also correct when he says that both broadband and telecommunications technologies are "pivotal to conduct daily activities" and would benefit Veterans and their families as they keep in touch with family, health care providers, government agencies, education providers, and possible job opportunities.

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In his letter, the Senator highlights the role technology can play in helping Veterans access health providers. We agree, and we are concerned about some filings supporting the FCC's proposal to limit eligibility for Lifeline to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Recipients of SNAP benefits do not always overlap with other programs the FCC recognizes as automatic qualifications for Lifeline. We think the current program qualifications, which include Medicaid, TANF, SSI, and other benefits programs for low-income people, should continue. Many Veterans and their families may not receive SNAP benefits but may be covered by Medicaid or SSI based on their medical issues.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss our experience with Veterans who currently benefit from the program, as well as our knowledge of potential barriers to participation and our outreach activities to increase participation in this vital program.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Constance A. Burns".

Constance A. Burns

President/CEO/Veterans' Service Officer